

Columbia Presbyterian Church's Senegal Ministries

September 2022

Columbia began its ministry work in Senegal in 1999. Session had responded to God's call on Columbia to reach the unreached by determining, after study and prayer, that Senegal was the country the church is called to. The original and continuing purpose of the ministry is to work through indigenous Christian organizations to establish an indigenous Wolof church (since expanded to include the Serer people). The ministry began by working through World Vision to help a small federation of Wolof villages accomplish development goals such as clean water, improved basic health care and better education for children. Lake Grove Presbyterian Church of Lake Oswego, Oregon began a similar ministry with an adjoining Wolof federation three years prior to CPC's involvement.

Specific goals were established by the Wolof federations (Columbia and Lake Grove) and World Vision. In 2008, the two federations combined and formed a single federation known as Kollore Gui. The leaders of the federation determined that the goals that they had set with World Vision and the churches (Columbia and Lake Grove) had been accomplished. As a result, World Vision withdrew from active involvement in Kollore Gui and recommended that the Christian Witness activities within Kollore Gui be turned over to CAPRO Ministries, an indigenous African evangelical organization.

During the last few years of World Vision's involvement in Kollore Gui, the leaders of Kollore Gui helped in the acquisition of a piece of property in the market town of Baba Garage. Construction of a building began, with the intent of housing a missionary family. While no family has yet to be placed there, CAPRO has staffed the mission post with two single men- Martin and recently, he was joined by Ibrahima. Columbia provides financial support for CAPRO's work which involves the area around Baba Garage, not just the Kollore Gui federation. Funding for CAPRO was initially to last for three years, but the church decided to continue to support CAPRO until now. Funding for CAPRO will be reduced to \$4000 in 2023.

Four years ago, our trusted partner in Senegal, Leopold Diouf, began an evangelism project, Project Nicodemus, in the area of Baba Garage. He has brought in various Senegalese Christians to assist him and also uses Nicodemus to help train the CAPRO missionaries so that they can become more effective. The Wolof have a saying in their language that "to be Wolof is to be Muslim." Therefore, to spread the Good News among the Wolof is a long-term effort, which will be done by little steps.

In mid-2022, the president of the Kollore Gui Federation filtered a request through Leopold Diouf, our ministry liaison in Senegal, asking that we fund an agro-forestry project in the village of Thiagal. The SMT vetted the request and agreed to fund \$7,500 of the \$9,000 requested and added it to the 2023 SMT budget. A similar project, funded by Lake Grove Presbyterian Church, is underway in a different village in Kollore Gui. Both projects are to be self-sufficient within four years of the project beginning and funding decreases each of those four years.

Many years ago, CPC became aware of Inter- Senegal Mission, an evangelical ministry involved in church planting. ISM, like our other ministry partners, is a holistic ministry meeting real earthly needs as well as spiritual needs of the people with whom it works. One of the largest arms of ISM is the Barthime hospital located in Thies, where medical care is provided for a nominal fee in the "Name of Jesus." ISM has gone through recent leadership and governance changes and Barthime is now associated, but financially independent from, ISM. ISM is a partner with Leopold on Project Nicodemus.

When World Vision withdrew from Kollore Gui, the World Vision Country Director, Eric Toumieux recognized CPCs history in and long-term commitment to the people of Senegal. Because of this, he suggested that Columbia continue to work in Senegal with a different unreached people group, the Serer, while continuing to support CAPRO's work among the Wolof. This led to our funding and supporting a special project among the Serer people in the area of Diakhao to teach adults (primarily women) to read and perform basic arithmetic. This literacy ministry was the idea of Pastor Ngor Faye, a Senegalese Presbyterian minister, who worked in coordination with World Vision to direct the literacy program and the associated children's recreation activities (kids clubs). Pastor Ngor and his family live in Diakhao and Columbia provides personal support for him and his family. World Vision has completed its work in Diakhao and the literacy centers are now self-supporting. Columbia members who sponsored children in Diakhao through World Vision, can now sponsor children in another Area Project in Lour-Ribot where CPC is supporting a small market garden project through World Vision.

After completing five years as country director for World Vision. Eric Toumieux returned to SIL (Wycliffe), where he put most of his energy into a project known as Beer-sheba. Beer-sheba occupies a ~200 acre parcel which Eric was able to acquire for very little since the local people consider it "cursed". At Beer-sheba, native vegetation has been regenerated, an ample supply of water has been discovered and a school established. The curriculum teaches young Senegalese men and women modern farming techniques for use in arid climates while concurrently teaching them basic ministry skills and Bible knowledge. Students at Beer-sheba reside at the complex and are known as interns. They learn the farming techniques by hands on training and the theological piece through daily classes and Bible knowledge. At the conclusion of their training, the interns go back to their home villages to do a project and to teach what they have learned and spread the gospel. There are between 10 and 20 interns annually. During visits to Beer-sheba, our teams have been so impressed by the spiritual and earthly potential of this ministry that Columbia has begun to fund the work there. Beer-sheba is now expanding into Mali and has a US Partner called the Global Poultry Initiative. Recently, Columbia began providing the salary for a teacher at the elementary school which has just started at Beer-sheba.

Malick and Feluine Fall are Wolof Christians. Malick has a widely listened to radio ministry and Feluine works with women and children in the north Senegal city of St. Louis. Through Feluine's work, women have been trained in life skills, job skills and literacy. She also has a children's ministry and both she and Malick reach out to the Talibe, a group of young boys whose parents turn them over to Muslim religious leaders – imams- to be trained in the Koran. They often learn very little of the Koran and end up begging for support money, much of which is turned over to their imam. Many times, they are abused and have little food other than what they can garner while begging. This ministry has also been supported by Lake Grove in the past and has multiple funding sources including Columbia.

Jose and France Lise Oliviera are Christian missionaries whom we first met while Jose served as the Executive Director for ISM. While no longer involved with ISM, they now spend about half of their time in France working with a small church not far from Normandy and returning to Senegal and other countries in West Africa to train Christian leaders. In 2022, the church stopped funding them, as their work is not directly related to our goal of establishing indigenous churches in Senegal. Christian Women's Retreat. The retreat is an annual event for Christian Missionary women and is open to any of them from West Africa, The retreat occurs in the fall in Dakar and provides an opportunity for Christian Women, many of whom live in remote areas with no other Christians around, to come together for personal and spiritual renewal. As we have found out, many of them rarely have a day off or time for rest. This ministry has also been supported by Columbia's United Presbyterian Women. Due to Covid-19, the retreat has not been held for two years. The last funds sent for this retreat will fund the 2022 retreat. The ministry will not be supported in 2023.

Child Sponsorship. Many members of Columbia would like to be involved in mission, but cannot or do not want to serve on committees or take mission trips. They want to do more, however, than contributing money to missions through the church. As a way to get people to put “their toes in the water,” the church has encouraged people to sponsor children in the Area Projects we support through World Vision. If they sponsor children in Senegal through World Vision and then find their way onto a team going to Senegal, they are often able to meet their sponsored children.

Senegal Mission Travel - Since the establishment of our ministry in Senegal in 1999, Columbia has sent a team to Senegal in all but five years. The team, known as the Go Team, has one continuing purpose - to support missionaries and the indigenous Christian church in Senegal in working with the Wolof and Serer to build relationships. The team is normally comprised of 6-9 people and is a blend of people who have travelled previously and those new to the ministry. We fund various activities in Senegal as shown above but do none of the physical work ourselves. Both Wolof and Serer people place a very high value on relationships. The Christian community in Senegal looks forward to our periodic visits and asks that we continue them since they reinforce the feeling that they are “not alone” and that there are many Christians here in the United States praying for and supporting their work.

Team members fund raise to pay for the trip and contribute 1/2 of the cost themselves with the balance obtained through fund raising within the church and outside. Money raised and not used for a specific trip is held in reserve for the next year and may be used to support other Senegal activities such as bringing people here from Senegal to speak to the church. Trip funds are managed by the Senegal Ministry Team. The church has historically provided \$7,000 in funding for Senegal travel, however, has not budgeted anything this year because of Covid-19 related travel restrictions.

Notes: Missionaries/mission groups who receive funding from Columbia are selected based on need, potential and must be involved in holistic ministry with the goal of bringing the Word to the unreached.

Rhythm and Impact of Senegal Ministry:

- January thru February – Go Team to Senegal
- March – Feedback to the congregations, small groups, children/youth groups, etc
- June thru August – Soliciting and selecting the next Go Team
- October thru December - Go Team training, fundraising, recruiting prayer partners
- January-Prayer Partner Dinner and commissioning of Go Team in Worship-Both services.

Impact in Senegal

While no Wolof or Serer church has been planted as a direct result of CPC’s involvement there, the encouragement which we give, both financially and by our visits, is a great source of inspiration to the Christian Community in Senegal. These partner ministries have been successful at planting churches and continue to reach out to the unreached. Significant development has occurred through our funding.

Impact on Columbia

Since our first trip in 1999, eighty individuals - members and staff of Columbia - have been to Senegal. The experience on the ground and with the Christians there is nothing short of life changing. Upon returning, many Senegalistas have become a significant part of the life of Columbia, serving as Elders and Deacons, leading ministry teams, supporting local ministries, and supporting the two missions the church supports in Haiti.

Matthew 28:19-20a The Great Commission

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you.